

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
MAY 18, 1999**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference Tuesday, May 18, 1999 from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm Eastern. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Anne Rhyne. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss additional, proposed changes to the language in Chapter 2, Section 2.0, Proficiency Testing Program: Interim Standards.*

NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Rhyne reported to the committee that a formal request will be sent to Dr. Ken Jackson, Chair of the NELAC Board, for his approval of the new members' appointments. New members are not official until the NELAC Chair appoints them to a committee.

SECTION 2.0, PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM: INTERIM STANDARDS

Ms. Rhyne introduced the need for new language in Section 2.0 concerning interim standards. The reason new language is necessary is because laboratories do not have direction for proficiency testing sample analysis until the time that the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has accredited the proficiency testing (PT) providers. Also programs for which NIST accreditation is not being offered are unaddressed. Therefore, the language on interim standards should be revised to address these two situations.

To address the concern that laboratories do not have direction on where to obtain PT samples in the interim period, the committee proposed the following amendments to the existing language in Section 2.0. The following is a revised version of the text as proposed by the committee. New language is underlined while existing language that the committee wishes to remove is marked by strikeout.

~~"For the period beginning with adoption of these standards by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and ending July 31, 1999, all National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)-approved primary accrediting authorities shall accept data only from proficiency testing programs that meet the requirements of current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and state regulations. Until such time as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has accredited PT providers, laboratories shall obtain for purposes of NELAC accreditation, PT samples from a PT provider that has submitted application to NIST for approval and that has submitted written attestation to the laboratory that it complies with NIST Handbook 150, NIST Handbook 150-19 and EPA's National Standards for Water Proficiency Testing Criteria Document (the December 1998 version or a more current copy). Following implementation of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) for Providers of Proficiency Testing, and before a Proficiency Test Provider distributes PT samples to~~

laboratories for the purpose of the laboratories obtaining or maintaining NELAP accreditation, the provider shall first obtain NVLAP accreditation for all compounds/matrices for which NIST accreditation is available, and for which the provider intends to provide NELAC PT samples. ~~The intent of these interim standards is to ensure that primary accrediting authorities accept for the purposes of NELAP accreditation all PT samples which are distributed by PT Providers which are NIST/NVLAP accredited for those compounds/matrices, and to continue the status quo for all other programs and compounds for which NIST/NVLAP accreditation is not currently available.~~

For all other programs and compounds for which NIST/NVLAP accreditation is not available, a provider of PT samples for NELAC accreditation by Registrar Accreditation Board (RAB)-approved Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTPA) or a provider that has provided evidence to the laboratory of applying to an RAB-approved PTPA for the specific matrix offered. The PT provider must also produce samples for these matrices that comply with all criteria published by the NELAC Standing Committee on Proficiency Testing.”

It was decided that Ms. Rhyne would distribute the minutes from this teleconference containing the new proposed changes to the standards to the full PT Committee membership for review and comment.

Ms. Dutrow advised Ms. Rhyne that this proposed amendment, when determined complete by the committee, was being proposed prior to the annual meeting, but not in time for the required posting of proposals. Ms. Dutrow reminded the committee that the intent of NELAC is to have proposals made public well in advance of voting at the annual meeting. Therefore, Ms. Rhyne agreed this proposal and its rationale, if satisfactory to the committee, will be discussed during the PT Committee meeting during the Fifth NELAC Annual Meeting and in her address to NELAC at the Closing Plenary Session just prior to submitting this proposal for voting.

The committee discussed how solid and hazardous waste PTs are covered in Appendix C of the existing standards. The committee expressed its intent to develop acceptance criteria for this area later in 1999. It was also noted that to address PTs for non-chemical disciplines (e.g., microbiology), the committee believes new appendices will have to be prepared.

Discussion for this teleconference concluded with the understanding that until the time that acceptance criteria are provided by the PT Committee for undefined areas, no PT providers' PT samples will be satisfactory for purposes of meeting NELAC standards.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
MAY 18, 1999**

| Item No. | Action | Date To Be Completed |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Ms. Rhyne will forward the minutes from this meeting to all committee members. Committee members are to review the proposed language and provide comment to Ms. Rhyne as soon as possible | 5/20/99 |
| 2. | | |

PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING TELECONFERENCE
MAY 18, 1999

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